





ditor's note

Under Construction ...

A visit to either the district offices in the Honolulu Federal Building or to the base on Sand Island will show you the upheaval of ongoing change. There are walls being moved, carpet being sucked off of the floor and temporary working areas being rigged. All throughout the Coast Guard, change is the watchword.

A meander through these pages, however, will show no evidence of any type of upheaval. You'll see our people, "ops" normal, finding new ways to prevent search and rescue by working with the tourist submarine companies who provide entertaining undersea adventures in the Hawaiian Islands and Guam. These "Sub SAREXes" greatly increased awareness and understanding of procedures on both sides in case a rescue is necessary.

Coast Guard divers, Coast Guard whales, I think you'll find everything is as it should be in our world. There are, however, two incidents, quite unrelated, that if held together, not only set the tone for this issue, but which deeply affected many of our people. Regardless of the changes that surround us, those actions which are the heart and soul of our organization continue.

The first of these incidents is the fire on the fishing vessel Kathleen. While no boat fire is ordinary, the explosion and fire aboard Kathleen was extraordinary, lighting the early morning sky with flames that could be seen for miles.

By the time the media started paging me, it was 4:15 a.m. and there had already been two survivors pulled out of the water. While one of the rescued men had only minor injuries, the other's injuries were grave. He had second and third degree burns to more than 90 percent of his body. It was also determined that three men were missing and were probably still in the sleeping compartment of the burning boat.

While the search continued for the missing three in hope that somehow they had managed to get out of the boat, we continued to receive updates from the hospital on the condition of the burned man. The Cutter Sweetbrier vainly attempted to dewater the Kathleen so they could determine if the three crewmen were still on board. It sank before they could make that determination.

The next morning we got word from the hospital that the badly burned man had died from his injuries. Although many of us knew in our minds that terrible burns are difficult to survive, we wanted so badly for him to live. Later that night, I sat down to watch my favorite program, *E.R.*, and could hardly believe what I saw. A paramedic rescuing children from a burning building became trapped and ended up with second and third degree burns on more than 90 percent of his body. The entire show was a death watch for him because the doctors knew he couldn't survive. My reaction that evening drew a very concerned

"What's the matter?" from my husband. From bed mood at work the next day, I could tell I wasn't the only one who felt that way. Abject futility is not a fun place to be.

I think that is why the rescue of the two Navy chiefs a few days later was such an incredible event. They were in such a little boat and the weather had been so poor. But the mood around the district was that there was never a doubt that we'd find them in one of our search areas. Sure enough, later that morning, my chief burst into my office and said "We found 'em." What a whirlwind of action surrounded the discovery that both of them were alive and well.

That case will keep me going for a long time.

Wendy
Executive Editor



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On The Front Cover

Front: An Air Station Barbours Point helicopter hoists a rescue swimmer from a commercial submarine during training exercises off Waikiki Beach.

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(photo by PA2 Scott Epperson)

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